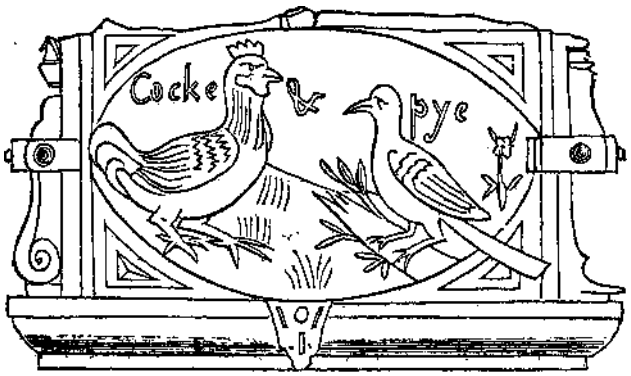
*SHAL** I will not excuse you[5]; you shall not be excused; excuses shall not be admitted; there is

ladies in a dish of gold or silver, was thus presented to each knight, who then made the particular vow which he had chosen, with great solemnity. When this custom had fallen into disuse, the peacock nevertheless continued to be a favourite dish, and was introduced on the table in a *pie*, the head, with gilded beak, being proudly elevated above the crust, and the splendid tail expanded. Other birds of smaller value were introduced in the same manner, and the recollection of the old peacock vows might occasion the less serious, or even burlesque, imitation of swearing not only by the bird itself but also by the *pie*: and hence probably the oath '*by cock and pie*,' for the use of which no very old authority can be found. The vow to the peacock had even got into the mouths of such as had no pretensions to knighthood. Thus, in The Merchant's Second Tale, or the History of Beryn, the host is made to say,

'*I make a vowe to the pecock* there shal wake a foul mist."

There is an alehouse sign of the *cock and magpie*, which seems a corruption of the *peacock pie*. Although the latter still preserved its genuine appellation of *the cock and pie*, the magic art of modern painters would not fail to produce a metamorphosis like that which we have witnessed on many other occasions. DOUCE.

" By *cock and pie*." Perhaps this is only a ludicrous oath, by the common sign of an alehouse. Here is ?i sketch from an old erne at Bewdley:



"Bycocke and pie and mousefoot," quoted by Mr. Steevens, looks as if the oath had not so solemn and sacred an origin as he Assigns it; but was rather of the nature of those adjurations,